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U.S. Department of the Interior

Great Sand Dunes National  
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## Great Sand Dunes National Park and Preserve

### News Release

For immediate release

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### **National Park Service Seeks Public Input on Ungulate Management Plan and Environmental Impact Statement for Great Sand Dunes National Park and Preserve**

The National Park Service is developing a plan to determine the appropriate future management of elk and bison within Great Sand Dunes National Park and Preserve that supports long-term protection of resources and is compatible with conditions and management activities across the broader eastern San Luis Valley landscape, to the extent practicable.

Elk and bison are on the landscape today. The elk herd in the eastern San Luis Valley is near historically high levels, and approximately 1,700 bison are currently managed by The Nature Conservancy on the neighboring Medano Ranch. Park Superintendent Lisa Carrico says “the plan is needed because we do not currently have a plan to guide the management of elk and a decision is needed to determine whether to have bison at the Park and Preserve in the future and if so, how to manage them.”

The National Park Service asked for public, agency, and partner feedback on the scope of this plan during the fall of 2011. Since that time, four preliminary draft alternatives, including a no-action alternative, have been developed and the National Park Service is once again asking agencies, partners, and the public for their feedback. “This is a very important step in the planning process and public participation is essential. It will ensure that the National Park Service understands and considers the interests of our neighbors, visitors, and partners regarding the range of preliminary draft alternatives under consideration,” says Superintendent Lisa Carrico.

The National Park Service will host two public open houses to discuss the planning process and accept comments on September 16 from 6:00-8:00 p.m. at the Baca Grande POA meeting hall in Crestone and September 17 from 6:00-8:00 p.m. at the Alamosa Recreation Center. Comments may also be submitted online at <http://parkplanning.nps.gov/grsa-ungulates>. The public comment period is open through November 2, 2014.

For more information contact Great Sand Dunes National Park and Preserve at 719-378-6395.

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